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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002869

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/18/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: TURKEY REQUESTING HELO SUPPORT FOR
CELIKKOL VISIT TO BAGHDAD

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Turkish government Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol contacted Ambassador May 18 to request urgently U.S. support for a trip he plans to make to Baghdad immediately after the new Iraqi government is announced. Celikkol said he had been advised by his embassy in Baghdad to limit his visit to the Green Zone, arriving and departing the same day, due to threats made against the Turkish embassy and staff in Baghdad. Celikkol plans to arrive and depart Baghdad International Airport via Turkish milair. While in Baghdad, Celikkol plans to convey Turkey's strong support to members of the new Iraqi government.

¶2. (C) Celikkol is requesting U.S. helicopter transport from BIA to the Green Zone and back to BIA for a Turkish party of four personnel, date to be determined but likely within two days of announcement of the new government. We urged Celikkol's staff to have the Turkish embassy in Baghdad communicate this request immediately to Embassy Baghdad.

¶3. (C) Comment. We have strongly encouraged the GOT to engage the new Iraqi government early and at a high level. Celikkol's visit would likely be preparation for a later visit by FM Gul and, ultimately, PM Erdogan. Given security threats to the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, we understand the GOT's preference for a quick visit to the Green Zone. We believe any reasonable U.S. assistance to this visit would contribute to our goal of maintaining strong Turkish support to our efforts in Iraq.

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WILSON